

KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

STAFF NOTE

Review Item:

Update on gifted and talented education

Applicable Statute or Regulation:

704 KAR 3:285, KRS 157.196, 157.200, KRS 157.224, KRS 157.230

History/Background:

Existing Policy. Before the Kentucky Education Reform Act (KERA), students who were gifted and talented were recognized as a group with special needs. Since 1978 and the first competitive gifted education grants, Kentucky legislators have recognized the importance of appropriate education for gifted students. In 1990, gifted children were designated a category of exceptional children in the Commonwealth. As defined in KRS 157.200, these exceptional children can be identified in five areas: general intellectual aptitude, academic aptitude in a specific content area (e.g., mathematics, science), creativity, leadership, or in the visual or performing arts. Thus, since 1990, districts have been responsible for identifying and serving children in these five areas of giftedness. Kentucky has created a strong infrastructure for educating students. KERA, coupled with the federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB), pledged to provide appropriate educational opportunities to all students.

Kentucky initially funded gifted education in 1978 in the form of a state appropriation (\$565,700) that was distributed to school districts as competitive grants based on a plan for an experimental program to serve gifted and talented students. In 1982 the KY Department of Education began using a unit distribution process for the state appropriation rather than a competitive grant process (\$1,196,900 total appropriation with one unit equaling \$18,000). By 1988, all school districts were providing programs with a district limited to a maximum of three units based upon the size of the school district (\$22,400 per unit). The *KY Educational Reform Act* of 1990 placed gifted students under “exceptional students.” Identification and services were mandated for the five areas of giftedness. Funds to support gifted and talented education programs were continued as a set-aside grant program outside the SEEK program. These funds remained similar to what they had been receiving, \$6,003,400 in 1990. Little growth in funding has been realized since the grant of \$6,003,400, in 1990, to the current year grant of \$7,121,500, with an 18-year gain of \$1,118,100. (See Attachment A)

Student Identification

Local school districts are required to adopt policies and procedures that provide an ongoing opportunity for all students to be considered for gifted and talented education services through informal screening and selection in the primary program and formal categorical identification in grades four (4) through twelve (12) in general intellectual ability; specific academic aptitude (language arts, mathematics, science, social studies); creative or divergent thinking; psychosocial or leadership skills; and visual or performing arts (art, dance, drama, music). School personnel are to

take into consideration environmental, cultural, and disabling conditions that may mask a child's true abilities that lead to exclusion of otherwise eligible students. The system for qualifying P-12 students for gifted and talented education services also calls for providing equal access for racial and ethnic minorities, disadvantaged children (defined as qualifying for free or reduced lunch) and children with disabilities. (See Attachment B)

Service Options

KRS 157.220 requires an individual education plan for all exceptional students. In gifted education the plan is called a Gifted Student Services Plan (GSSP). Grouping for instructional purposes and multiple services delivery options are to be utilized in the gifted education plans. Ongoing assistance for gifted and talented students is needed to further develop individual interests, needs and abilities. Services must be provided during the regular school day. Local school districts must provide multiple service delivery options primary through grade twelve (12). Examples of service options include: acceleration options, advanced placement and honors courses, special counseling services, differentiated study experiences for individuals and cluster groups in the regular classroom, distance learning, enrichment services during the school day and independent study.

Using Data to Drive Decision Making

Yearly data and end-of-year summative evaluations of Kentucky's 174 school districts help KDE staff and districts examine the future direction of support and professional development of areas in need of improvement. Data evaluation is helpful for those in the field looking at statewide trends and using their own data as an impetus for direction, assistance and positive changes.

KDE provides data and statewide summaries to other state and national organizations, such as the National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC). NAGC uses states' data to increase awareness of the state of gifted education in the United States, as well using state information to provide support for positive change. Kentucky's regulation is widely regarded as a model for a comprehensive state policy on gifted education.

Partnerships

KRS 158.648 discusses the purpose and duties of the partnership and collaboration between the State Advisory Council for Gifted and Talented Education and the Department of Education. The Council advises and makes recommendations regarding the provision of services for gifted and talented students in the Commonwealth.

KDE works in collaboration with the Kentucky Association for Gifted Education (KAGE). KAGE advocates and supports the educational needs of gifted and talented youth in Kentucky.

KDE partners with state directors of gifted and talented education and with the National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC), thereby increasing awareness of the importance of providing for the needs of our gifted and talented youth nationwide, including Kentucky's gifted and talented students, who are all competing for world-wide leadership.

KDE Supports

KDE provides a positive leadership role affecting gifted programming decisions made at local levels. State guidance reduces the misinterpretation of the regulation that results in disparity of identification and services between school districts.

While KDE only has one consultant identified specifically to address the needs of this population, support is provided in several ways. Some examples include: technical assistance; resources; interpretation of the gifted and talented regulation; professional development; and daily email and phone conversations with concerned parents, teachers needing strategies for working with gifted and talented students, and gifted and talented district coordinators needing assistance with special duties including program evaluation and end-of-year reports. Often issues and concerns of parents and school districts involve a collaborative effort across the department to provide assistance.

KAGE Legislative Agenda

The Kentucky Association of Gifted Education presented its white paper on Gifted Education's Future: *Mining Untapped Treasure, Children and Youth of the Commonwealth Who Are Gifted and Talented* at the June 2007 meeting of the Kentucky Board of Education. Representatives from that organization will provide an overview of progress toward their goals at the October 2008 meeting.

Impact on Getting to Proficiency:

In order for every student to be proficient and prepared for success, students who are gifted and talented must be appropriately identified and their exceptional instructional needs met.

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